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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
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10/087,107

03/01/2002

Terese Finitzo

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5034

26116

7590

05/05/2006

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EXAMINER

RIMELL, SAMUEL G

ART UNIT

PAPER NUMBER

2164

DATE MAILED: 05/05/2006

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary	Application No. 10/087,107	Applicant(s) FINITZO ET AL.	
	Examiner Sam Rimell	Art Unit 2164	

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☐ Responsive to communication(s) filed on ____.
- 2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 18-31 and 40-49 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) ____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) ____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 18-31, 40-49 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) ____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) ____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on ____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. ____.
3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.


SAM RIMELL
PRIMARY EXAMINER

Attachment(s)

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892) | 4) <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date. ____. |
| 2) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) | 5) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152) |
| 3) <input type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date ____. | 6) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: ____. |

Response to election Requirement: Applicant has made election of claims 18-31 and 40-49 with traverse. Applicant argues that the inventions are related to the generic feature of permitting a user of an expert system to custom tailor a set of rules to their own criteria. This argument is generally correct with respect to the elected claims, however many of the non-elected independent claims contain no such requirement. For example, independent claims 2 and 11 contain no requirement for any form of customization of rules. Accordingly, applicant's arguments are not fully consistent with the language in the non-elected claim groupings, suggesting that the non-elected inventions are distinct. Further basis for finding that the inventions are distinct are provided in the examiner's action of 9/2/05. For example, examiner established that non-elected group III contains a requirement for producing a pass/fail condition, where such requirement is not present in any of the other groups. Group I contains a requirement for a result corresponding to a hierarchical level, where such requirement is not in any of the other groups. Examiner maintains that the restriction requirement is proper for establishing distinct inventions and the restriction requirement is accordingly made final.

It is noted, however, that this office action is a non-final office action.

The nonstatutory double patenting rejection is based on a judicially created doctrine grounded in public policy (a policy reflected in the statute) so as to prevent the unjustified or improper timewise extension of the "right to exclude" granted by a patent and to prevent possible harassment by multiple assignees. A nonstatutory obviousness-type double patenting rejection is appropriate where the conflicting claims are not identical, but at least one examined application claim is not patentably distinct from the reference claim(s) because the examined application claim is either anticipated by, or would have been obvious over, the reference claim(s). See, e.g., *In re Berg*, 140 F.3d 1428, 46 USPQ2d 1226 (Fed. Cir. 1998); *In re Goodman*, 11 F.3d 1046, 29 USPQ2d 2010 (Fed. Cir. 1993); *In re Longi*, 759 F.2d 887, 225 USPQ 645 (Fed. Cir. 1985); *In re Van Ornum*, 686 F.2d 937, 214 USPQ 761 (CCPA 1982); *In re Vogel*, 422 F.2d 438, 164 USPQ 619 (CCPA 1970); and *In re Thorington*, 418 F.2d 528, 163 USPQ 644 (CCPA 1969).

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A timely filed terminal disclaimer in compliance with 37 CFR 1.321(c) or 1.321(d) may be used to overcome an actual or provisional rejection based on a nonstatutory double patenting ground provided the conflicting application or patent either is shown to be commonly owned with this application, or claims an invention made as a result of activities undertaken within the scope of a joint research agreement.

Effective January 1, 1994, a registered attorney or agent of record may sign a terminal disclaimer. A terminal disclaimer signed by the assignee must fully comply with 37 CFR 3.73(b).

Claims 18-31 and 40-49 rejected on the ground of nonstatutory obviousness-type double patenting as being unpatentable over claims 8-14 and 21-25 of U.S. Patent No. 6,394,811. Although the conflicting claims are not identical, they are not patentably distinct from each other because the claims of the patent recite an extraction of values corresponding to the features which is not recited in the present claims, where such difference between the claims would have been obvious to the person of ordinary skill in the art.

35 U.S.C. 101 reads as follows:

Whoever invents or discovers any new and useful process, machine, manufacture, or composition of matter, or any new and useful improvement thereof, may obtain a patent therefor, subject to the conditions and requirements of this title.

Claims 18-24 and 40-44 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 101 because the claimed invention is non-statutory.

Claims 18 and 40: Each of claims 18 and 40 are addressed to a method which results in the output of a conclusion. A conclusion is set of data and is not a tangible result. Since claims 18 and 40 do not meet the requirement for presenting a tangible result, they are considered non-statutory. See *State Street Bank and Trust Co. v. Signature Financial Group, Inc.* 149 F.3d 1368, 47 USPQ 2d 1596 (Fed. Cir. 1998).

Claims 19-24 and 41-44: Depend on claims 18 and 40 respectively.

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No prior art rejections are applied with this action. Accordingly, the claims will be allowable upon submission of a terminal disclaimer to overcome the obviousness double patenting issue and amendment of claims 18 and 40 in a manner appropriate to overcome the rejections under 35 USC 101.

Any inquiry concerning this communication should be directed to Sam Rimell at telephone number (571) 272-4084.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'S. Rimell', is positioned above the printed name.

Sam Rimell
Primary Examiner
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